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Chair: Mr. Saikal ..... (Afghanistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

1. **The Chair** said that the Group of African States had endorsed the candidacy of Ms. Shikongo (Namibia) as Vice-Chair of the Third Committee at its seventy-third session.

2. *Ms. Shikongo (Namibia) was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for its seventy-third session by acclamation.*

Organization of work (A/73/250, A/C.3/73/1, A/C.3/73/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/73/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

3. **The Chair** said that document A/C.3/73/L.1/Rev.1, containing the organization of the work of the Committee, had been drawn up on the basis of past practice in the Committee and consultations with the Secretariat. The note by the Secretariat concerning the allocation of agenda items was contained in document A/C.3/73/1. The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in document A/C.3/73/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1. The Secretary of the Committee would continue to update the Committee on the status of documentation throughout the session.

4. Recalling the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work in chapter II of the report of the General Committee (A/73/250), the Chair stressed the importance of punctuality and adherence to time limits for statements and rights of reply and to deadlines for submission of proposals and inscription on the list of speakers. He highlighted two additional guidelines in the report: first, on the consideration of further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the Assembly; and second, on the need to enhance synergies and coherence and reduce overlap in the agendas of the General Assembly, especially of its Second and Third Committees, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as other related forums, in accordance with relevant rules of procedure and in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) read out a list of the special procedure mandate holders and other experts scheduled to make presentations to the Committee at its current session.

6. **The Chair** said he took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and other experts to submit their reports to and interact with the Committee.

7. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that there was no legal basis to justify the inclusion of the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi in the list of special procedure mandate holders scheduled to make presentations to the Committee. The Human Rights Council had recently adopted resolution 39/14, in which it requested the Commission to share its report and recommendations with the African Union and all relevant organs of the United Nations and to present a final report to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. The Council had not, however, indicated that the Commission should provide an oral report to the Third Committee and had made no reference to the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

8. By including the situation in Burundi on the agenda, the Third Committee would be setting a dangerous precedent. Certain countries were trying to use United Nations bodies as tools for exerting political pressure on and controlling the affairs of targeted States. The politicization, selectivity and double standards displayed by those countries contradicted the universality and indivisibility of human rights and risked compromising the noble human rights goals that had been set out when the Human Rights Council had been established in 2006.

9. Events which had occurred in Burundi since 2015 had been triggered by the irrational motivations of a small group of countries and were reflective of political, not human rights, issues. Indeed, United Nations bodies had divergent stances on the situation in his country: whereas the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi had taken note of the considerable improvement of the situation in the country, the Human Rights Council, controlled by a handful of countries, continued to politicize human rights with the aim of changing the elected institutions through anti-constitutional and violent methods. The Commission of Inquiry was a tool of that axis of countries which since 2015 had tried in vain to bring about a violent and unconstitutional change in Government. Their aberrant plans to again try to manipulate United Nations bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, were destined to fail. Indeed, various countries had expressed concern at the way in which the Council worked and the control exerted on it by certain countries. It was crucial to prevent the Third Committee from tarnishing its credibility by falling sway to that same dangerous trend.

10. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that delegations had been informed during a briefing the

previous week that the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia would be added to the list of mandate holders if the Human Rights Council decided to extend their respective mandates in time for the Committee's first meeting on 2 October 2018. The mandate for the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry derived from Human Rights Council resolution 36/19 of 29 September 2017, in which the Council requested the Commission to present a final report during an interactive dialogue at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. The Council had subsequently adopted resolution 39/14 on 28 September 2018, in which it extended the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, thereby confirming that the Commission would still exist during the Committee's seventy-third session. The case of Somalia was identical: the Human Rights Council had, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 36/27 of 29 September 2017, requested that the Independent Expert report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and, in resolution 39/23 of 28 September 2018, had renewed the Independent Expert's mandate. Consequently, there was a legal basis for the inclusion of both mandate holders on the list before the Committee.

11. A similar situation had occurred at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, as the Council had extended the mandate of one mandate-holder shortly before the opening of the session. By contrast, during the seventy-first session, the Committee had not extended an invitation to a representative of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea because its mandate had elapsed.

12. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that it was not possible for a Commission to have parallel and competing mandates, thus the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 39/14 rendered the previous resolution 36/19 null and void.

13. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the two mandates were not competing but were issued as part of a two-step process in which the Council first issued a mandate to report to the Committee and then a separate mandate confirming the extension of the respective expert's mandate. In the case of Burundi and Somalia, the Third Committee did not actually need to send invitations to the experts because they were already mandated to appear before the General Assembly in accordance with the earlier resolution.

14. When the Third Committee had initially adopted the interactive dialogue format at the end of the 1990s, mandate holders were invited to engage in the interactive dialogue at the Third Committee on an ad hoc basis. Since that system had given rise to acrimony and bitter negotiations as to which mandate holders should be invited, the Committee had informally agreed to extend invitations to all mandate holders and that practice had not changed for the previous twenty years. Although some resolutions specifically referenced interactions with the Committee and therefore rendered invitations redundant, others did not. The Secretariat had therefore adopted the practice at the start of each session to read out the list of mandate holders authorized to report to the Committee.

15. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that his delegation wished to request the legal opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs on the issues raised.

16. **Mr. Yusuf** (Somalia) said that his delegation also wished to seek legal counsel on the inclusion of the presentation by the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia.

17. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that her country firmly opposed the establishment of country-specific mandates. In the case of Burundi, the recent Human Rights Council resolution did not specify that the Committee should hold an interactive dialogue with the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi.

18. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that it was not his role to comment on the establishment of country-specific mandates.

19. **Ms. Alfeine** (Comoros), supported by **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt), said that the Committee should delay the adoption of the list of the special procedure mandate holders until the Office of Legal Affairs had provided its legal opinion on the matter.

20. **Mr. Charwath** (Austria) said that his delegation shared the Secretariat's interpretation of the resolutions. Since the Third Committee interacted with all mandate holders and independent experts, it would set an unfortunate precedent not to hold an interactive dialogue with the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia.

21. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that paragraph 22 of Human Rights Council resolution 39/14 was ambiguous. It referred, on the one hand, to the holding of an interactive dialogue with the Human Rights Council and, on the other hand, to the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, but not the seventy-third session. In order to start the current session in the most tolerant and transparent atmosphere possible, the Committee should postpone the adoption of its organization of work until it had received legal counsel on the issue in question.

22. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Committee could submit a request for a legal opinion on any issue, however, all Member States must formally agree on the exact question to be asked and the request must be sent in writing to the Office of the Legal Counsel through the Chair. The representative of Morocco was correct that Human Rights Council resolution 39/14 contained no specific provisions regarding the holding of an interactive dialogue with the Third Committee, however, there was no need for such a provision since it was the Committee's modus operandi to hold interactive dialogues with all mandate holders.

23. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that, to avoid drafting a new request, the Committee could use the note which his delegation had sent to the Secretariat the previous day stating the grounds for its objection to the agenda item.

24. **The Chair** said that the Secretariat would work with the delegation of Burundi and other delegations concerned on drafting a request for a legal opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs. He took it that the Committee wished to extend invitations to all other special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and experts, and to postpone the sending of invitations to the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia until the Office of Legal Affairs had delivered its legal opinion.

25. *It was so decided.*

26. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in the document A/C.3/73/L.1/Rev.1, subject to amendment.

27. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 137: Programme planning

28. **The Chair** said that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/9, in which the General Assembly re-emphasized the role of the plenary and the Main Committees in reviewing and taking action on the appropriate recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination relevant to their work, in accordance with regulation 4.10 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the Assembly had decided to allocate that item to all the Main Committees and to its plenary to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. No action was expected under agenda item 137.

Agenda item 28: Social development

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/73/214)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/73/61-E/2018/4, A/73/211/Rev.1, A/73/213, A/73/220, A/73/254)

(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (A/73/292)

29. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that inclusive social development was critical to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Collective efforts would be needed to remain on track.

30. Significant social progress had been made over the past two decades, including in the areas of job creation, gender equality, social protection and rural development. Around 1 billion people had been lifted out of poverty since 1999, while life expectancy had increased by 11 years in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia since 1990. Economic growth had played an important role in supporting that progress and the world economy had shown considerable improvements, with global growth reaching 3.1 per cent in 2017 — its fastest pace since 2011.

31. Overall progress, however, had been uneven, since global economic growth had not brought about commensurate social benefits for all people. An estimated 736 million people lived in extreme poverty in 2015, while hunger was on the rise again for the first time in more than a decade, increasing from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. Fast technological advances also posed challenges to social development; as the future of employment and labour market institutions evolved, the benefits of such advances were not equitably shared.

32. Global wealth inequality had been rising, particularly since the financial crisis of 2008. According to some estimates, the richest 1 per cent of the global population owned 82 per cent of wealth in 2017, while the poorest half had seen no increase in their wealth. However, rising inequality was not inevitable and could be addressed by fiscal, wage and social protection policies, which would be the priority theme of the fifty-

seventh session of the Commission for Social Development.

33. The work of the Third Committee during the current session would also address questions relating to youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, the family and indigenous peoples. As the proportion of the world's older population increased, there was a growing need for affordable and high-quality long-term care. Investment in the world's youth was also a must for accelerating progress and was a unique opportunity to lay the foundation for a peaceful and sustainable future. Barriers continued to impede the full participation of persons with disabilities in social and economic development and concrete action was needed to promote accessibility and ensure equal opportunities. There had been some positive developments in upholding the rights of indigenous peoples, yet a wide gap remained between policies and their implementation. In line with the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations had developed a system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples that was being implemented under his guidance as coordinator of the follow-up to the World Conference.

34. Social protection was an important policy tool to help eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and promote inclusion, which was the key message of the 2018 Report on the World Social Situation. Nevertheless, close to 4 billion people had no social protection in 2016, and there was a global deficit of social protection for groups such as older persons, youth, persons with disabilities and the unemployed.

35. The high-level political forum would be convened in 2019 under the auspices of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It was critical for the forum in September — at the Summit level — to give renewed momentum to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and become an important milestone in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. International cooperation would be required to address common challenges and deliver benefits to all, leaving no person and no country behind. Multilateralism was key and transformative shifts were needed. Political leadership was imperative; technological advances must be shared; and adequate financing must be mobilized.

36. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced four reports of the Secretary-General under agenda item 28 (a) and (b). Empowerment, which would be the main focus of the high-level political forum in 2019, was a common theme in all four reports, and the aim of the recommendations made was to empower people to fulfil their potential and make the vision of the 2030 Agenda a reality for all.

37. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/73/214) underscored the need to address inequality in all its dimensions in order to empower people to achieve the goals of the World Summit and the 2030 Agenda. However, the progress that had been made demonstrated that, with the right mix of policies and institutions, inequality could be reduced.

38. A key message of the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons (A/73/213) was that investment in quality long-term care services and decent care jobs was beneficial not only for older persons but also for employment growth, gender equality and poverty reduction.

39. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes (A/73/61) focused on the efforts made by Member States to create national frameworks and institutions for family policies and programmes. Family policies were essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, since all the Goals affected families in one way or another.

40. The report of the Secretary-General on inclusive development for persons with disabilities (A/73/211/Rev.1) presented recent progress in promoting disability-inclusive development in areas such as disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and urban and rural development. However, there remained a persistent gap between policy and practice in implementation of the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda. For instance, the situation of persons with disabilities remained largely invisible and unaddressed in disaster preparation and response. Available information indicated that 73 per cent of persons with disabilities would find it difficult to evacuate in the event of a sudden disaster and 6 per cent would be unable to evacuate. Persons with disabilities were by far the largest minority group, and their numbers were likely to rise owing to factors such as population ageing.

41. **Mr. Allen** (Chief, United Nations Volunteers), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/73/254), said that the report noted the trends of the global state of volunteerism and reviewed progress under the plan of action.

42. A whole-of-society approach was needed to implement the 2030 Agenda effectively, and volunteer engagement was an efficient tool in that regard. Volunteer engagement enabled the expansion of services, fostered greater ownership and supported data collection, monitoring and accountability. In addition, volunteer schemes provided minority groups with an opportunity to contribute to development initiatives and could be used to build national capacity and enhance the employability of young people. During the reporting period, there had been a strong emphasis on young people and inclusion in efforts to mainstream volunteering in national policies and schemes.

43. New technological solutions were offering greater flexibility and outreach, but could also increase the digital divide, a risk that needed to be acknowledged and mitigated.

44. Contributions by citizens were increasingly reflected by Member States in their national processes to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted in intergovernmental forums such as the high-level political forum. In 2018, over 60 per cent of participating countries had recognized the valuable contribution of volunteer work in their voluntary national reviews.

45. A shift from ad hoc and isolated volunteer projects to sustainable investment at scale was needed to widen volunteering opportunities and ensure the inclusion of all people. The report highlighted several priority actions that would enable stakeholders to maximize the impact of voluntary efforts in pursuit of peace and development under the 2030 Agenda.

46. **Ms. Sachs-Israel** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on literacy for life: shaping future agendas and education for democracy (A/73/292), said that literacy was a fundamental part of the right to education and indispensable for active participation in knowledge-based societies and economies. It was also a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, and the stark challenges in that area around the world required urgent policy attention. The vision for literacy in the Goals was underpinned by an understanding of literacy as a continuum of proficiency that could be developed throughout life and provided through formal and non-formal education, but also through informal learning. It also demanded an intersectoral approach that linked literacy learning to other areas for sustainable development.

47. In the context of its work to follow up on the recommendations for literacy action in the Belém Framework for Action, in 2017 UNESCO had organized a mid-term review in Suwon, Republic of Korea. UNESCO had also expanded its knowledge base in the area of youth and adult literacy through research, publications and database expansion. The Global Alliance for Literacy, coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, would focus on promoting partnerships to help Member States strengthen literacy policies and programmes.

48. The literacy objectives contained in Goal 4 required an increase in national investment. It was imperative that the initiatives and mechanisms put in place at international level for funding education also targeted youth and adult literacy.

49. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons) said that older persons were the most rapidly growing segment of the global population: by 2050, for the first time they would make up more of the world population than children under age 15. That challenge affected all regions of the world; although Western Europe currently had the oldest population, two thirds of older persons lived in developing countries, and most of the projected growth in that population segment would take place in the global South. A demographic transformation of that magnitude would have profound effects on societies at all levels, and there was growing concern regarding human rights in relation to the ageing of the population.

50. Older persons were the most diverse of all the age groups. Some enjoyed good health and lived independently, while others needed various forms of assistance due to loss of mobility or chronic and degenerative health problems. Her most recent report to the Human Rights Council had focused on the challenges arising from assistive technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and automation with respect to the full exercise of the fundamental rights of older persons. Such technologies would transform lives, including care for the elderly, in years to come. That observation should be taken as neither prophetic nor alarmist, but as an invitation to reflect on and consider the ways to ensure that the fundamental rights of older persons were protected both now and in the future.

51. Neither the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights nor the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made explicit reference to the right to assistive technologies, nor did they address the unprecedented quantities of information such devices could collect, process and store and how that data could be utilized. The only instrument that touched on that matter was the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities. It might be necessary to review the existing policy framework to ensure a human rights-based approach to assistive technologies, possibly through an international instrument that specifically addressed the rights of older persons. The impact of the use of those technologies on the self-determination of older persons must be better understood.

52. Her annual report to the Human Rights Council had examined the impact of social exclusion, defined as the separation of individuals or groups from the rest of society, on older persons. Being deprived of resources, rights, goods and services and not having the opportunity to participate in social relationships and activities undermined the quality of life of older persons. Rapid urbanization and gentrification, where market forces took priority over the human rights of neighbourhood residents, also affected the ability of older persons to remain in their homes.

53. Older persons were rarely the focus of the Sustainable Development Goals, despite the General Assembly encouraging Member States to take into account issues affecting them in their efforts to achieve the Goals. The Goals were indeed aimed at all persons of all ages and the needs of all social groups, including older persons. However, that was not a guarantee that no older persons would be left behind. While other groups such as children and persons with disabilities had been given special attention in the Goals, older persons had not. Their past, current and future contributions to society should be recognized through a human rights-based approach to development that included measures to combat age discrimination. Social protection systems to provide income to older persons and measures to guarantee access to housing, employment, health care and physical and social infrastructure would ensure equality with the rest of the population.

54. She had reached the conclusion that the lack of an international instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons had major consequences on a practical level, in that it would continue to be difficult to define clearly the obligations of States towards older persons and that current regulations did not provide sufficient guidance for government action and public policy.

55. The Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing had continued its work to identify areas not adequately covered by regulations and possible gaps in the protection of the rights of older persons. It had also addressed the fundamental issues of autonomy and independence, as well as long-term and palliative care. In closing, she commended the Government of Austria for its leadership and initiative in organizing and international conference on the human rights of older persons, to be held in November 2018 in Vienna.

56. **Ms. Al-temimi** (Qatar) said that her delegation welcomed the emphasis in the report of the Independent Expert on the importance of offering assistance to families so that older persons could stay in their homes for as long as they wanted. The Government of Qatar recognized the positive impact of policies that supported families and protected them from poverty, exclusion, violence and involuntary separation. She was interested in hearing more about the Independent Expert's plans to promote the role of family in protecting the rights of older persons.

57. **Ms. Oliver** (Australia) said that her delegation welcomed the discussion on mobilizing the existing human rights architecture to meet the challenges faced by older persons. The report of the Independent Expert had highlighted the social exclusion experienced by older persons as a result of stereotypes and prejudices. In response, Australia had developed a suite of policy measures that were guided by a human rights-based approach to ageing. The Government was improving mental health support, developing more comprehensive palliative care and enhancing services for people living with dementia. The Government also promoted physical activity among older persons. More must be done, however, for older indigenous Australians, who experienced heightened vulnerability. The issue of abuse within the elder care system also needed to be addressed, and, to that end, a Royal Commission would study issues related to the quality of residential and home care. Australia was also pursuing quality and safety improvements in the sector through legislation and accreditation reform.

58. **Mr. de Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his country had participated in the sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, whose work had been fundamental to the discussions regarding the protection of the human rights of older persons. It was vitally important to recognize that the human rights of older persons could not be protected without securing the rights of those responsible for their care. The current model of low-paid elder care was unsustainable because it was based on the abuse of other vulnerable groups, such as women and migrant workers.

59. A binding multilateral instrument on the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons could foster international engagement and could provide guidelines for addressing complex issues related to ageing. The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons was an important regional response and had raised awareness of the human rights

of older persons. The Brazilian delegation wished to hear more on how the Independent Expert planned to coordinate with the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization on developing standards for care work.

60. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union) said that the protection of the human rights of older persons was a priority for the European Union and its member States, as reflected in the European Union Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Furthermore, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, in its 2018 Fundamental Rights Report, noted a gradual shift in attitudes towards older persons, with the focus moving from their needs towards their potential and rights. However, more needed to be done to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by older citizens.

61. The Independent Expert's recent report to the Human Rights Council had highlighted the importance of combatting ageism and reconceptualizing the ways in which societies viewed older persons. He asked for suggestions on ways to accomplish those goals. The report had also highlighted the risks of gentrification for older persons specifically and the importance of participatory mechanisms of policy design and approaches to development that promoted the engagement of older persons in decision-making. He asked how States could ensure that older persons were included in decision-making processes related to their places of residence.

62. **Ms. Dravec** (Slovenia) said that her delegation wished to highlight the importance of partnerships between multisectoral stakeholders in effectively responding to the housing needs of older persons. The Slovenian Government was addressing demographic changes by strengthening national policies in several areas, particularly housing. It aimed to provide appropriate and acceptable housing options for all older persons and, to that end, was exploring cohabitation as a means of enabling independent living and improved quality of life. Her delegation would like to hear more on good practices for tackling social exclusion through the development of national housing policies.

63. **Ms. Holbach** (United Kingdom) said that the report to the Human Rights Council had touched on the complex causes of the social exclusion of older persons. A common theme of those discussions had been the need for high-quality care for older persons. Her delegation believed that everyone should have appropriate levels of advice and care and that States should promote equality for older persons; to that end, the United Kingdom would ensure that, by 2020, all medical curricula would include training with respect to older persons. It was also committed to supporting the health and well-being of those who provided that care and had accordingly developed an action plan. She asked how older persons could be better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of later life.

64. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that her delegation viewed housing, social protection, employment, health and independent living as goals to be realized over time and agreed that attention to those areas would promote social inclusion. The Administration for Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services was a key Government entity whose overarching objective was to enhance the well-being of older persons as well as their families and caregivers.

65. Her delegation disagreed with the Independent Expert on the need for a new convention addressing the rights of older persons and was of the view that existing human rights instruments promoted the human rights of all individuals, including older persons. Scarce resources should not be directed towards prolonged multilateral negotiations but rather should be used to support tangible national and local efforts to address the challenges faced by older persons. She would be interested to hear more on the ways in which technology could be used to promote social connection for older persons, particularly those who were geographically isolated, and recommendations for Governments that wished to help civil society play its full role in supporting older citizens and their caregivers.

66. **Ms. Bernal Prado** (Chile) asked what measures were recommended to promote the rights of older persons in the context of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

67. **Ms. Shikongo** (Namibia) said that her Government had taken note of the recommendations made by the Independent Expert after her visit to Namibia the previous year. Specifically, the Government had increased old-age pensions and grants as a means of alleviating poverty.

68. **Mr. Garcia Moritan** (Argentina) said that he would like to hear more about effective measures to change the perception in society of older persons as passive recipients to one as active contributors. Noting the view of some Governments that the existing international human rights instruments were sufficient to monitor the enjoyment of human rights by older persons, he asked what protections those instruments provided for that vulnerable group.

69. **Mr. Gonzalez** (Colombia) said that the new opportunities for support to older persons through

robotics, automation and other assistive technologies were especially significant. He expressed concern, however, about the costs and access to such technologies for low and middle-income countries, and asked how they could be made more accessible, perhaps through North-South cooperation.

70. **Mr. Hendricks** (South Africa) said that his Government believed that care services and support systems were vital to maintaining the health and well-being of older persons and to ensuring that they enjoyed dignity, autonomy, personal safety and the ability to participate in their communities. Policies and legislation should provide incentives to stakeholders to enable older persons to live in their homes for as long as possible. Traditional support systems, including medical home-based care, should be strengthened in order to enhance the capacity of families and communities to care for older persons. Residential and geriatric care should be optional even in long-term care situations so as to ensure the autonomy of older persons and their right to participate in decision-making.

71. The plight of unpaid care workers had received increased attention. In countries where maternal mortality remained high, and where the HIV/AIDS crisis had created a situation where grandparents were responsible for raising their grandchildren, young children were often charged with caring for older persons. What actions could Member States take to ensure that the human rights of older persons were protected in such situations?

72. **Ms. Kornfeld-Matte** (Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons) said that the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing had worked with a number of agencies, including the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization, in its approach, since rights in all areas affected the person as a whole. As many delegations had pointed out, the family played a crucial role in providing care for older persons. Most wanted to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible, either in their own homes or with family members. Society and the State must support those family caregivers by providing them with training in caring for their older members and through expert outside carers who were well-trained and paid a fair wage. When older members of society had no resources, Governments must see to it that the infrastructure — whether housing, transport or medical care — was in place to support them, through some type of pension scheme. The Working Group had consulted with an alliance of all sectors, including social service agencies, non-governmental organizations, governments and associations of older persons.

73. In response to the representative of the United States of America, who had expressed the view that an international instrument specifically addressing the rights of older persons was not needed as their rights were covered by existing instruments, she said that Governments lacked a tool for follow-up and monitoring of policies aimed at protection for the rights of older persons that regular reporting under such an instrument would provide. Currently, less than 1 per cent of United Nations programmes and proposals specifically mentioned the rights and obligations of older persons. Moreover, an international instrument in that area would do much to change the image of older members of society from passive to active. The Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons was an example of an instrument that had provided its target group with a greater sense of security. Those members of society had contributed to their countries and should not be left aside at the end of their lives.

74. Many of the assistive and robotic technologies being developed were relatively low in cost and were already broadly accessible. For example, a "smart" watch could have many applications in health care, and the technological solutions to aid mobility could be of great help to caregivers.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.